

S. 2275. An act to make technical corrections to the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998.

S. 2282. An act to amend the Arms Export Control Act, and for other purposes.

S. 2294. An act to facilitate the exchange of criminal history records for noncriminal justice purposes, to provide for the decentralized storage of criminal history records, to amend the National Child Protection Act of 1993 to facilitate the fingerprint checks authorized by that Act, and for other purposes.

S. Con. Res. 30. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that the rules of multilateral economic institutions, including the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, should be amended to allow membership for the Republic of China on Taiwan and other qualified economies.

S. Con. Res. 81. Concurrent resolution honoring the Berlin Airlift and commending the Berlin Sculpture Fund.

S. Con. Res. 106. Concurrent resolution to commend the Library of Congress for 200 years of outstanding service to Congress and the Nation, and to encourage activities to commemorate the bicentennial anniversary of the Library of Congress.

S. Con. Res. 107. Concurrent resolution affirming United States commitments under the Taiwan Relations Act.

The message also announced that pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 105-186, the Chair, on behalf of the Democratic Leader, appoints the following Senators to the Presidential Advisory Commission on Holocaust Assets in the United States—the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER); and the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD).

The message also announced that pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 105-186, the Chair, on behalf of the Majority Leader, appoints the following Senators to the Presidential Advisory Commission on Holocaust Assets in the United States—the Senator from New York (Mr. D'AMATO); and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER).

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 21, 1997, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 30 minutes, and each Member, other than the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

OREGON DEATH WITH DIGNITY LAW

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, one of the most difficult decisions we in Congress routinely face on the Federal level is choosing where to act or intervene in a decision that is reached elsewhere. There are some that are relatively easy decisions for most Americans, as in the case of where there is active discrimination or a failure to

protect the environment. People feel entirely comfortable with the Federal Government moving to assure equity and environmental protection.

Many, however, are decisions that are very much in a gray area, which some choose, unfortunately, to use for political reasons. One of these gray areas, the decision that affects the end of life, is perhaps one of the most difficult and personal.

In the State of Oregon, which I represent, we have struggled, debated and agonized over this issue for the last 4 years. The end-of-life issue is a very complex one, and, with the advent of new medical technologies and our rapidly aging population, it is getting more so for more of us.

There are a wide range of ways to impact on these decisions, but none, as near as I can tell, require Federal help or interference. Yet today, the House Committee on the Judiciary is poised to have one of its subcommittees deal with legislation that would do precisely that, undermine a decision that has been agonized over in my State of Oregon for these last 4 years.

There are, in fact, some very technical problems of a serious nature with this legislation. It would, in fact, interfere with the practice of medicine, of pharmacy, of pain management, of hospice management, in ways that would have profound effects on rights that many in America have taken for granted, and that is why there are large numbers of the medical profession that have come forward with their opposition to legislation of this nature.

In Oregon, our legislation, Death with Dignity, is still a work in progress, but the fact is the preliminary evidence suggests that this option may actually reduce the incidence of violent suicide while easing the burden of both the individual and their family.

Rather than having a flood of people to our State to take advantage of the provisions of the Death with Dignity law, it appears that individuals, having the knowledge that they, their families and their doctors can control this decision, gives a sense of peace and contentment that enables some people to move forward, enduring the pain and the struggle, without resorting to taking their own life.

At this very moment, there are people in America who are struggling with this question in their family, and, before the day is out, there will be someone in America who will, in fact, hasten their death.

As Americans struggle with these issues, mostly hidden from public view, it is important that we not have that personal tragedy, that agony, that frustration made more difficult by laws that ignore the realities of modern medicine and the range of legitimate personal medical choices.

As we age as a society, exponentially, with the increase of the elderly population, and just the growth in our population, this will become more serious. As medical science continues to ad-

vance, the difficult decision points are going to be made more difficult and more complex.

The evidence suggests that Americans support the principles of Death with Dignity. But whether you are a conservative and supportive of States' rights, or you are characterizing yourself perhaps as more progressive and feel that the government should be involved with more innovative policy development, it should be a point of common agreement that the Federal Government should allow Oregonians to continue their struggle in the implementation of Death with Dignity and avoid unnecessary Federal interference.

AMERICA UNITING IN PROVIDING FLORIDA DISASTER RELIEF

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) is recognized during morning hour business for 5 minutes.

Mr. STEARNS. Madam Speaker, my home State of Florida has been ravaged with the worst outbreak of fire in the State's history. We have seen the type of destruction which devastates communities. Such a disaster demands that people work together to protect life and property, and, in these cases, some of the best qualities come out of our American people.

Since June 1, 1998, in a prolonged drought, we have seen 1,946 reported fire outbreaks. The destruction is widespread. Fires have burned over 485,000 acres of land, over 2,200 homes and structures, and several businesses.

Madam Speaker, the outpouring of goodwill and assistance we received came not only from within our State, but from the Federal Government and, in fact, from 44 other States. Foreign countries even offered aid, with one loaning a special fire-fighting unit.

The Florida National Guard and U.S. Marine units worked together to help evacuate people, clear brush and build temporary bridges to transport the heavy fire-fighting equipment. Contractors in the private sector volunteered machinery and manpower to battle the flames and transport water. Churches, schools, motels and businesses opened their doors to shelter over 100,000 evacuees. Donations poured in to aid the victims and help the brave emergency workers and firefighters.

I am proud to represent these kinds of people, particularly the people who live in Palatka, Florida. These residents did not suffer the fire damage seen in other areas, but were able to open their doors to over 2,000 evacuees streaming from nearby Flagler County and other fire-stricken areas.

The local Price-Martin Community Center served as an information center, providing directions to nearby shelters. Folks from my county who love horses went over to Volusia County and helped with those folks who had horses that were straying. Volunteer nurses